

# POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

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## ABSTRACT

The media plays a vital role in a democracy; educating people in general about political issues and acting as a watchdog against misuse of power. Indian Politics has watched a turn of progress over the timeframe and its dependency over social media to connect with people experiencing the fellow democracies and its effect. Over its diversified nature, 40% of its total population constitute of Indian youth and concerning to the trendy society, Indian political parties are holding to web and social media to connect with youth for their agenda and political events.

During election campaigns the media provides information and analysis about the political parties' plans, policies, aspirants and performance. Social media has changed legislative issues in India and all around. Its effect has impacted the way candidate campaign for their election. Social media allows politicians and their parties a method to connect directly with people across the country at a eased cost and greater reach than conventional media. Social media is not simply the next in a line of communications technologies: it has also changed everyday activities and connected people in a manner never before possible.

It's no hide truth, that adolescent of this age is exceptionally put resources into legislative issues and the round of thoughts around it. Social media has become a platform of influenced opinions and charges and even though politicians for their campaigns still use advertisements, cut-outs, leaflets and graffiti for their gathering, but becoming digital and being attentive over digital platform has changed the picture or urban India and politics.

Twitter is a wonderful platform for the political organisation to transmit information on a worldwide stream; be it discussions or dialogs. This Paper is descriptive in nature and aims to examine the extent use of social media by the political parties to promote their image and political messages, among their supporters and peoples in social media.

**KEYWORDS:** Politics, Social Media, Communication, Social Networking Sites.

## INTRODUCTION

Social media is now a very famous phrase in media due to the fact traditional mass media Political Campaigns. Political parties use social verbal exchange medium are noticeably

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regulated by election commission of India. For over past few years politicians have taken the internet in an attempt to reach voters in our new media society. At first it was the use of static webpage to promote campaign goals, pledges and information. However, as social media or the social networking sites began to rise in popularity in the mid-2000, campaigns began in earnest attempting to harness their power to reach more voters.

For instance, the 2008 U.S. presidential election was the benchmark as the first election to fully grab the power and reach of the Social Networking Sites to impact voters. The U.S. President, Barack Obama's campaign used Facebook in an exceptional ways to reach out the young voters. It worked, allowing him to win the votes nearly 70 percent of voters that were under 25 years old. (Dutta S, Fraser M (2008) Barack Obama and the Facebook election. U.S. News & World Report.)

Social media is also facilitating a new way by which people are able to search and share information and increasing their awareness. (Akar E (2011) An examination of the factors influencing consumers attitudes toward social media marketing. Journal of Internet Commerce 10: 35-67.) For example during anti-corruption movement 2012, social activist, Anna Hazare used social media to connect people in New Delhi.

Politicians use social media to communicate with their audience and to call them either to protest, or to vote. So, the use of internet has made it relatively smooth for a wide range political parties, social activist, individual leaders are getting attention towards social media.

In addition to the impact that social media has for campaigns in the conventional experience of expanding the reach of their message to more voters and often younger voters. Social media

activities can be either used to predict the outcome of elections. However, many companies have attempted to use the data which is available from the social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and other platforms to forecast election outcomes. It is assumed that people visits these social media platforms with their ideas and thoughts regarding their political leaders during the election periods. While through careful content and structural network analysis these platforms will provide similar results to usual election polling.

Hence, social media has emerged as a vital tool of communication and has created new ways of political rally and encourage social media users in political activities ranging from joining their political groups by tweeting, status update, expressing supports through these mediums and posting videos on Youtube.

Political campaigning has become a major focus in the growing field of social media studies. Researchers across the world analyse political online communication. This analysis aims to identify how the political parties managed to mobilize social media users by means of the communicating through social networks sites, blogs and videos on Youtube.

## **CATEGORISATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media technologies engaged many different forms including blogs, business networks, enterprise social networks, forums, microblogs, photo sharing, products/services review, social bookmarking, social gaming, social networks, video sharing and virtual worlds.

The Social Network Revolution has led to the rise of the social networking sites. Research shows that the audience spends maximum amount of their time on social networking sites, thus proving how popular social media platforms have become.

## **USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN INDIAN CONTEXT**

Social media is playing a considerable new role in Indian democracy. With the changing politics of India political parties and politicians have found a new ways of reaching out to a younger and aspiring population. The use of social media by Indians was first highlighted during the 2008 Mumbai attacks when information shared through Twitter between Indians and the others.

“The second mass use of social media in India was the May 2009 national elections, when, for the first time, online voter registration and transparency campaigns started” where first time political parties tried to reach out to voters through social networking websites.

However, all of these are still in trend, but increasingly in urban India, political parties are becoming technology addicted as this is the only way to reach out powerful youths. Among major political parties in India, BJP has the biggest magnetism in social media. BJP started using the social media even before 2009 general election, which it lost. But in recent years, it has dig deeper into social media. Several senior leaders like Narendra Modi and many are on social networking sites. Narendra Modi as the BJP’s prime ministerial candidate for the 2014 general election has his own team for his social media management.

Social media has also credited with helping the new Aam Aadmi Party and its candidate, Arvind Kejriwal, won a surprise victory in Delhi against major political parties.

## **SIGNIFICATION OF THE STUDY**

The social media have practically buried the physical and social gaps. They are also considered as horizontal media of communication. They provide the benefits of participatory democracy and development in modern society. Modern political parties have utilized the social media to enhance their political strategies and gain public support. The political parties have also joined the ‘cyber world’ mainly to multiply political transactions and engineer the support of various sources.

Presently, emphasis is laid on the setting of ever lasting relationship between political parties and people. Social media practice is one of several forms of political communication and needs to be examined from the point of view of ‘social engineering’. In this age of convergence, new media practices are required to focus the attention of the people on electioneering process.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- To identify the various social media platforms used by the respondents.
- To identify the popular social media platform used by respondents for political awareness.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study uses Survey method which is helpful to collect data from each sample. Questionnaire method has been followed to collect the data from users of the study in which 100 questionnaires were distributed among respondents equally consisting 50 male and 50 female respondents were selected randomly from them.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1. Gender of the Respondents**

Sex	Respondents	Percent
Male	50	50%
Female	50	50%
Total	100	100%

Table 1 shows that 50 are male respondents and 50 are female respondents covered in the research.

**Table 2. Age of the Respondents**

Age (in years)	Respondents	Percent
18 - 25	35	35%
26 - 40	46	46%
40 - 60	19	19%
Total	100	100%

Table 2 Shows that Majority of the respondents age category 18 to 25 years of age and only 19% covered are in the age group between 26 to 40 years of age, 35% of respondents are under the belongs to age group of 40-60 years.

**Table 3. Awareness on Social Media Sites**

Awareness	Respondents	Percent
Yes	88	88%
No	12	12%
Total	100	100%

The Table 3 clearly shows the maximum numbers of respondents are aware of social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn etc. While, only 12% of respondents are unaware of social media platforms.

**Table 4. Preferred Social Media Sites**

SNS	Respondents	Percent
Facebook	60	60%
LinkedIn	18	18%
Twitter	22	22%
Total	100	100%

The table 4 clearly shows that 60% respondents believe that Facebook is the most popular social media platform and 22% Preferred twitter, while the least LinkedIn is used by only 18% of respondents

**Table 5. Purpose of Social Media Use**

Purpose	Yes	No	Total
Entertainment	60	40	100
To Get News	47	53	100
For Making Friends	49	51	100
Others	25	75	100

The table 5 shows that maximum number of respondents prefer Social Media platforms for entertainment purpose and 49% use for making new friends or connect with the old ones. Rest

47% respondents use Social media sites to update themselves with news while 25% use these platforms for business and their personal use.

**Table 6. Popular Political Party on Social Media**

Political Parties	Yes	No	Total
AAP	85	15	100
BJP	89	11	100
INC	75	25	100

The Table 6 shows that BJP is the most popular political party on social media platforms with 89%, while AAP secured second rank with 85% and the third popular political party on social media is INC with 75%.

### CONCLUSION

The results show that the use of social media for political activities influences peoples' political efficacy, political knowledge, and political participation. The study also shows that social media users may additionally discover political activities in social media and by means of this way intensify their political knowledge, increase their political efficacy, and improve their political participation. Moreover, the social media usage for political activities was influenced by frequency of preferred social media use. The more often they use social media, the more often they use social media for political activities. The research shows that, for those who discussed the election on Twitter, the role of the web in this regard is significantly stronger than that of the mass media. Twitter attracts a completely strange subset of citizens, who differ from the population writ large in terms of demographic characteristics. Engaging with politics through the web is favourable to greater face-to-face involvement and the propagation of digitally acquired information through interpersonal interaction, and these effects seem to occur regardless of the individual's social and

demographic characteristics. The findings suggest the possibility that as more begin to use social media to speak about politics; we will begin to see even more offline discussion of politics. The effects recommend that what happens on internet doesn't appear forever and people get influenced by face to face conversations. To the extent that that is actual, the political needs that are articulated through social media will become tougher to disregard for all and people who's involved in political manner.

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